

July 21, 2000

dedicate himself through practice and hard work, which led to his second-to-none selection.

Congratulations, Adrian!

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LEONARD L. BOSWELL

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2000

Mr. BOSWELL. Mr. Speaker, because of illness in the family, I was necessarily absent on the following votes yesterday. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following manner:

Rollcall No. 410—"yea" on the Neal (MA) amendment;

Rollcall No. 411—"yea" on the motion to recommit;

Rollcall No. 412—"yea" on final passage of H.R. 1102;

Rollcall No. 413—"yea" on adoption of the conference report accompanying H.R. 4576;

Rollcall No. 414—"yea" on final passage of H.R. 4118;

Rollcall No. 415—"yea" on motion to instruct conferees to the bill H.R. 4577;

Rollcall No. 416—"yea" on final passage of H.R. 2634.

FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT FINANCING, AND RELATED PROGRAMS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 13, 2000

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4811) making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2001, and for other purposes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chairman, today, I cosponsored an amendment to withdraw the global "gag" language from the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill. The language denies U.S. family planning funding to any overseas organization that uses its own non-U.S. funds to provide abortion services. The family planning dollars appropriated in this bill are critically important to the prevention maternal and child deaths and the continued spread of STDs. Congress should not make the allocation of this life saving funding contingent on how a foreign organization chooses to spend its own dollars.

CONTRACT OR REGULATIONS

HON. DAVID E. BONIOR

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2000

Mr. BONIOR. Mr. Speaker, this is the time of year when millions of homeowners take the

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

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plunge and hire a contractor to fix the roof or add a deck or make any one of dozens of important—but costly—home improvements.

Now, if you're like most people, before hiring a contractor you want to make sure that you're dealing with a reputable firm.

For instance, you wouldn't want to hire a company with a record for leaving trash in people's yards. You wouldn't want to hire a company known for breaking the law. That's just common sense.

Well, that's what the President's proposed contractor regulations are, too: common sense.

The regulations say that, before the federal government awards a contract, we ought to consider a company's record. It says we ought to look at how responsible a firm has been before they get one nickel in taxpayer money. It says America's government ought to be as careful spending money as America's families are.

Now, I call that being a smart consumer.

That's different from the way things are now.

As it stands today, if the government has to sue a contractor, taxpayers can be forced to pay the company's lawyer bill—even if the company loses.

And it doesn't stop there.

Under current law, it's okay for a contractor to charge Uncle Sam for the costs of fighting to keep their workers from organizing a union.

As incredible as it seems, that's something that actually happens today.

Should any contractor be worried about this measure?

Not the reputable ones who follow the law.

Today we can send a powerful message. The message is that, from here on in, when it comes to spending tax dollars, the United States government is going to be one tough customer.

LET'S REQUEST THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION TO STUDY HOW HIGH DRUG PRICES HURT THE U.S. ECONOMY

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2000

Mr. STARK. Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee recently wrote to the U.S. International Trade Commission requesting a section 332 study relating to the pricing of prescription drugs by certain U.S. trading partners. The questions asked—if one reads between the lines—seem to be designed by the pharmaceutical lobby to study whether countries that control drug prices are being unfair to the drug companies; whether such price controls have caused U.S. prescription medication prices to be higher than they would otherwise have been. Implicit in the phrasing of the questions, is the assumption that other countries should be paying more.

Other sources of information suggest another approach. Perhaps Americans should be paying less.

The pharmaceutical industry is in an enviable financial position. Drug firms enjoy, on

average, three times the profitability (28 percent) of the other 36 industry groups in the Fortune 500. While maintaining the present level of research and development, they were able to invest, last year, about \$14 billion in direct-to-consumer advertising, public relations, lobbying and promotion to doctors. Taxpayers paid more than 30 percent of the costs of R&D through government grants, in addition to the millions in benefits from the government from R&D tax credits. The industry reaps huge benefits, while poor Americans choose between needed medications and paying the rent or for food; or they cut prescriptions in half to try and prolong their pharmaceutical supplies.

The U.S. spends far more than any other country on health care (14 percent of GDP) yet it ranks 37th in the world in the quality of health systems; we rank in the lowest 25 percent of industrialized nation's in life-expectancy and infant mortality. Our system is inefficient and wasteful. American health care has an over-emphasis on state-of-the-art cure instead of preventive care; relatively, we are overwhelmed by MRIs, CAT scanners and high priced drugs. Why have drug costs increased at more than twice the general inflation rate, leading to prescription drug spending growing at twice the rate of all other health expenditures, accounting for 10 percent of total health expenditures?

Perhaps, the chairman's requested study could be extended to include the increased productivity our economy might enjoy if drug prices were lower and the resources used instead on repairing the country's infrastructure, on education or even to lower taxes. How does the high cost of health care impact our trade balance? How much of the "extra" cost of an American car is attributable to the inflated cost of providing health care to workers, driven by such factors as rapidly rising pharmaceutical prices?

We may be able to coerce our trading partners into allowing prices to be raised for their citizens. However, I doubt that Americans will be overjoyed to discover that the efforts of the International Trade Commission resulted in poor Mexicans being deprived of their life-saving medications, to further enrich the pharmaceutical industry (which will not be passed on to American consumers, in any case). The answer is obvious, we should be concentrating not on forcing others to pay more, but on convincing the prescription drug manufacturers to be a little less aggressive in maximizing profits here at home.

CENTRAL NEW JERSEY CELEBRATES THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE FLEMINGTON AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY #159

HON. RUSH D. HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 20, 2000

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the accomplishments of the Flemington American Legion auxiliary #159. This organization has continually made lasting contributions to its local communities through hard work and dedication to those in need.